

Secret



DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence Memorandum

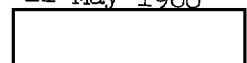
RECENT NORTH VIETNAMESE ACTIVITIES BETWEEN THE 19TH
AND 20TH PARALLELS

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21 May 1968



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Approved For Release 2004/07/08 : CIA-RDP82S00205R000200040018-0

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
21 May 1968

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Recent North Vietnamese Activities
Between the 19th and 20th Parallels

1. Logistics activities south of the 20th parallel continue at a high level, although not as intensive as that reported previously. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] No MIG flights south of the 20th parallel have been detected since 11 May. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] it cannot be determined if construction activities are taking place. There has been a slight increase in the number of antiaircraft guns deployed south of Thanh Hoa and some redeployment of SAM battalions in areas close to the Vinh and Bai Thuong air facilities.

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Logistics Activities

2. Information on logistics movements between the 19th and 20th parallels is still restricted by [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] confirms last week's report of a high level of transshipment and logistics activity in the Thanh Hoa area. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

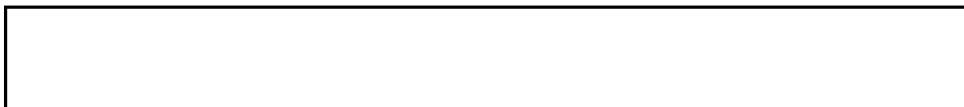
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Note: This memorandum was produced solely by CIA. It was prepared jointly by the Office of Economic Research and the Office of Current Intelligence and was coordinated with the Director's Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs and the Office of National Estimates.

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3. [redacted] about 34 trucks operating in the Thanh Hoa area, 17 of which were POL trucks. Several hundred 55-gallon POL drums were observed in the city. One storage area, located just west of Thanh Hoa, was approximately 600 yards long and included stocks of POL drums, crates, cables, and other materials. It has not yet been determined whether the stocks in this storage area have been expanded significantly since the bombing pause.

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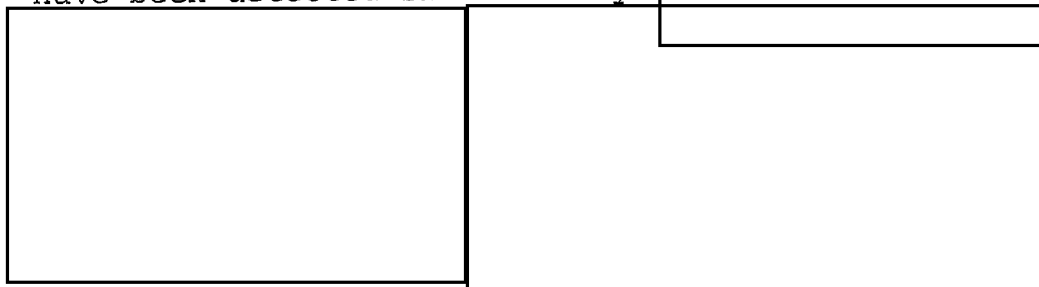


Air Operations

5. No MIG flights south of the 20th parallel have been detected since 11 May. [redacted]

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6. The Communists appear to have activated another airfield capable of supporting MIG jet operations. The new facility is located at Yen Bai, which is northwest of Hanoi and about midway between the capital and the Chinese border.

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Air Defense Activities

7. Preliminary analysis suggests the Communists have added a few antiaircraft weapons to their inventory in the panhandle region south of Thanh Hoa since early March. The slight increase -- [redacted] raises the total number of weapons in the panhandle area to about 2,000. It is not known if these weapons were moved from the north or were new imports.

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[redacted] suggests that the North Vietnamese have redeployed some of their surface-to-air missile (SAM) forces to provide protection to air facilities in the Vinh and Bai Thuong areas. Although the time frame for this development is not entirely clear, it seems to have occurred since early April. It now appears that at least five SAM battalions are located near Vinh.

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[redacted] An additional one or two battalions continue to be deployed in the Bai Thuong area.

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Bai Thuong Airfield

9. It is unlikely that a permanent runway (asphalt or concrete) has been completed at Bai

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Thuong [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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10. The Bai Thuong Airfield is located about 18 nautical miles northwest of Thanh Hoa. Construction started in the spring of 1965, but work progressed slowly because of repeated US bombing.

[REDACTED] revealed that the runway had not been paved, although much of the ancillary construction was nearing completion.

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11. [REDACTED]

the presence of a damaged IL-14 at Bai Thuong, the first time an aircraft had been seen at this airfield. Track activity indicated that the IL-14 landed on an adjacent sod strip parallel to the uncompleted main runway. This strip was constructed prior to both the Tet offensive and the bombing halt and is adequate for limited use by jet aircraft.

12. The dimensions of the main runway at Bai Thuong are approximately 6,600 by 160 feet. The field has a service apron, parallel taxiway, dispersal taxiways, and 10 revetments capable of accommodating MIG-15, 17, 19, or 21 aircraft. Bai

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13. The availability of Bai Thuong would not only give North Vietnam an increased capability to carry out interceptor missions against US strike aircraft, including B-52's, but also would extend its capability to take targets in South Vietnam under attack. MIG-17's operating out of Phuc Yen, for example, could not take under attack targets much further south than Kontum, and MIG-21's are limited to targets north of Qui Nhon. The use of Bai Thuong extends the operating radius of MIG-17's into South Vietnam almost as far south as Ban Me Thuot and that of MIG-21's an additional 30 miles south (see the map).*

14. The distances from Bai Thuong to some of the more significant locations in South Vietnam are as follows:

	<u>Nautical Miles</u>
DMZ area	200
Danang	280
Phu Bai**	250
Chu Lai***	330
Kontum	365
Pleiku	390
Qui Nhon	430
Ban Me Thuot	460

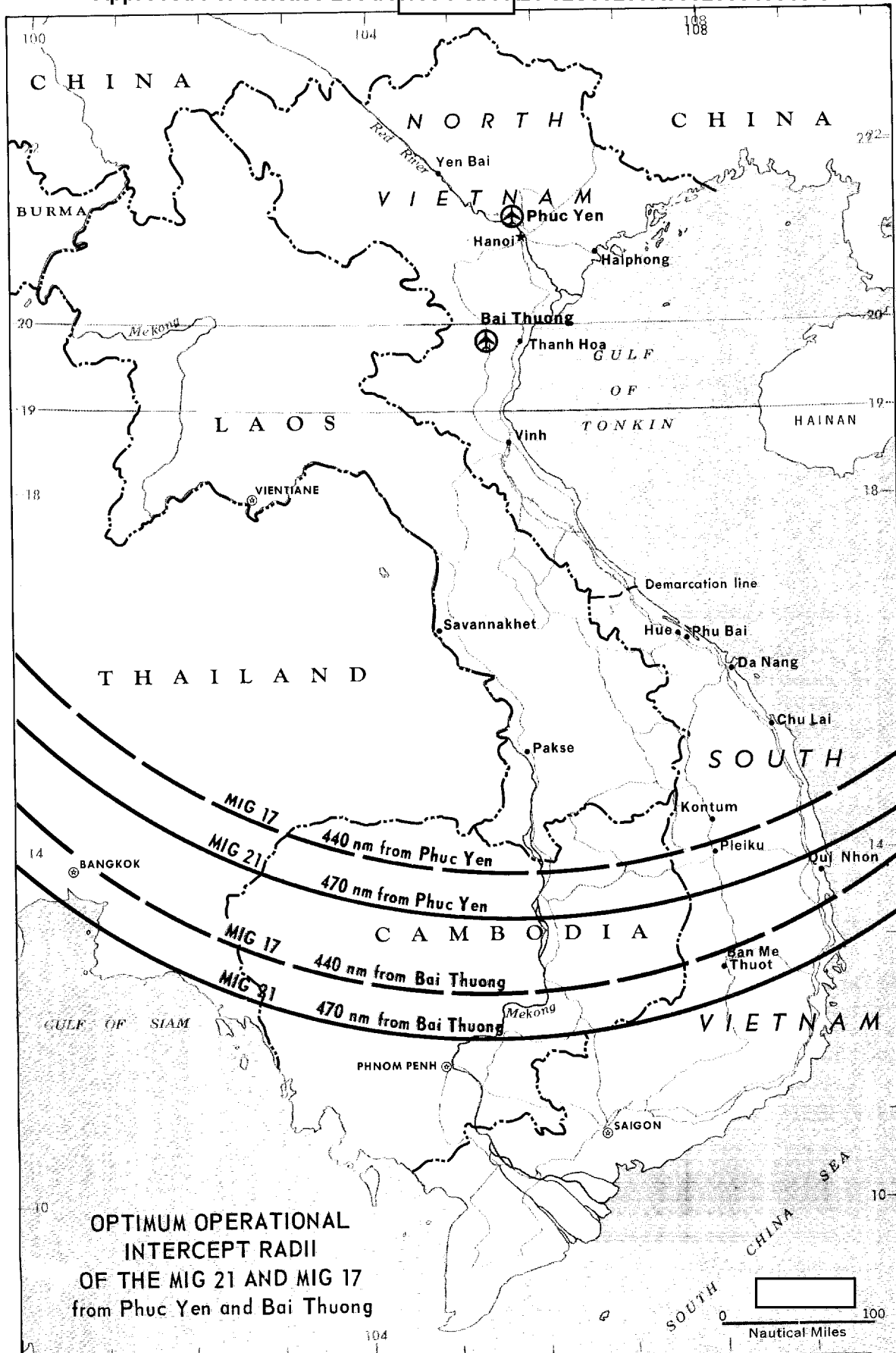
* These examples are based on a theoretical computation of an optimum mission that provides for a maximum loiter time -- 10 minutes -- over the target area.

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